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Philippine Notes

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The several items of new data and observations on prehistoric artifacts from the Philippines, presented here, have to do with pottery and metals, and relationships among the Philippines, Malaya and the Mekong Delta.

Pottery

Fitted lids of earthenware

Among the Kalanay Complex pottery of the Philippines are common forms which have been interpreted as lids (Solheim, n.d.): some would fit down over and encircle the rim of a vessel and others fit the inside rim in the manner of a plug. Without strictly standardized sizes it is likely that when a lid was made it was to fit a specific vessel. In the finished pair of vessels the slight irregularities in the respective rims might require a bit of juggling between the two for the best fit but with small size and weight this would not be difficult. In a vessel of large mouth diameter, say about 25–30 cm., it would become quite a problem. To slide the lid around the rim or in the mouth of a large vessel for a fix, while smoothing the two surfaces in contact, might lead to breakage as irregularities in their diameters might get both wedged. A simple way to solve this problem would be to put some distinguishing mark at matching points on the lid and vessel to indicate the position of best fit. This was apparently done on a pair of vessels recovered from a site in the Philippines.

The Guthe Collection, gathered by Carl E. Guthe and now in the Museum of Anthropology of the University of Michigan, has a large number of sherds of Kalanay Complex pottery from a site of unknown location; they represent several large vessels from 40 to 100 cm. in diameter, including a pair, one apparently a lid for the other (No. 71 and 74, Solheim, n.d.; fig. 27*c–d*). There were pairs of circular perforations through the rims of both vessels such as could serve to fasten them together. There were good indications that a second set of matching pairs of perforations were present on opposite sides of the circumference of the vessels. Between one pair of perforations on the lid (No. 71) there was an open incised triangle pointing down. On the bottom vessel one pair of perforations had no incision but one rim sherd with a portion of a perforation showing (No. 74) and by all indications from the same vessel, had a small triangle incised on its edge. When I was working on these sherds this seemed to me to mark the corresponding place on the lid which fitted the lower vessel.

This hypothesis was recently partly confirmed. Plate I*a* shows a carved wooden box from Ifugao, Mt. Province, Philippines, which was used as a container for

ceremonial paraphernalia. Although I purchased the box in 1954, I did not notice the two pairs of circles carved on the side of the lid and bottom, until some months ago. When the paired circles are matched the lid fits the bottom nicely, but when placed with the circles on opposite sides it does not fit well and if pressed on to the bottom it gets wedged and is difficult to remove.

Slim River pottery relationships

G. de G. Sieveking, in his recent article on 'The Iron Age Collections of Malaya' (1962) twice remarked on the close relationship of Slim river pottery to some Philippine pottery. He bases this hypothesized relationship primarily on the similarity of paste and possibly also on slip and form. His first statement is that 'Identical red or yellow sand-tempered wares, covered in many cases with a black bituminous slip, have also been found at the Iron Age dwelling site at Novalitches [Novaliches] in the Philippines (Otley Beyer's sites I and II "slipped" and "unslipped" wares, University of Malaya coll., Singapore). It is clear that the sites in Java and the Philippines must be closely related to those in Lower Perak' (*ibid.*: 91). His second statement is that 'Though isolated examples of this iron industry are known from southern Indo-China and the Malayan industry should be related with this region, since its distribution suggests a northeastern landing place, it is clear that this spread was only part of a wider series of emigrations in South-East Asia attested by the presence of Slim River pottery in Java and the Philippines . . .' (*ibid.*: 122).

Sieveking apparently presumes this relationship on observations made of a few examples, probably sherds, in the University of Malaya collection. I suspect that only sherds were examined as even the primary collection of Beyer's in Manila contains very few whole vessels. Sieveking does not refer to the only published illustration of this 'Iron Age' pottery (Beyer 1947: pl. 14). From this illustration and the number of illustrations of pottery of the Novaliches Pottery Complex presented by Solheim (n.d.: pl. 36–38) since Sieveking's article appeared, there is little if any similarity between the Slim river and the Novaliches pottery. Further, the prehistoric iron artifacts found in the Philippines with one exception presented below, show no relationship to the prehistoric iron artifacts of Malaya. Thus, for the sites with Novaliches Complex pottery at least, no close relationship is indicated with the sites in Lower Perak.

On the other hand, there is a general similarity in the forms of the Slim river pottery with the pottery of the Kalanay Pottery Complex of the Philippines. The majority of the Slim river forms illustrated (Sieveking 1962: pls. 7–9) are duplicated by common Kalanay Complex forms (Solheim 1961*a*: 160–161). The two vessels from Java that Sieveking uses to suggest the relationship of Slim river pottery with the Javanese pottery (1962: 90, fig. 5) are also similar to Kalanay Complex forms. However, the iron artifacts associated with the Kalanay Complex pottery are not similar to those of Malaya, with the exception mentioned.

If there were a series of 'Iron Age' emigrations in Southeast Asia (one of which brought the Slim river pottery and iron to Malaya) they were not closely related to each other, or at least, the one going into Malaya had a different content than did the iron using cultures of the Philippines.

METAL

Iron artifacts from Philippines, Malaya and the Mekong Delta

No attempts have been made to put together the information on the iron artifacts recovered from prehistoric sites in the Philippines. The earlier reports picture about 35 iron artifacts (Beyer 1949: fig. 9; Beyer and de Veyra, 1947: 35; Fox, 1959*a*: pl. 1 and 29; Fox 1959*b*: pls. 14, 15, 163, and 164; Solheim, 1951: fig. 8; Solheim, 1961*b*: pl. 8*d*). My study on the Central Philippines (n.d.: pl. 8 and 46–48), which should have appeared in 1963, illustrates over a further hundred iron tools.

The great majority of the iron artifacts from the Philippines are points or blades and are usually tanged instead of socketed. Of the 35 tools previously illustrated two are definitely socketed and one more is possibly socketed (Beyer and de Veyra, 1947; 35 in 104 far right specimen; Fox, 1959*b*: pl. 164 top; Fox, 1959*a*: pl. 29 centre). From the illustrations, all three appear to have been cast flat and the socket hammered. The one illustrated by Beyer is from Novaliches, dating very early in the Christian era, while the other two are from Batangas of about the 14th and 15th centuries.

Only three iron tools among the one hundred odd ones from Central Philippines are socketed and one of these is probably a Spanish pikehead. The other two appear to have been cast with the socket (Solheim, n.d.: pl. 47*m* and 49*a*).

Sieveking's paper and illustrations (1962) indicate that, with one exception, the iron artifacts of Malaya are socketed and probably cast with sockets (*ibid.*: 96). The exception to the common variety is a group of four tanged knives from Batu Kurau, Perak (*ibid.*: pl. 16*d–e*). All four of these have an angle between the blade and tang.

The two iron blades pictured by Malleret (1960: pl. XVIII top left) from the Mekong delta are both tanged at an angle to the blade. They differ from the Perak blades: having a small angular projection at the outer angle between the blade and tang. None of the iron blades previously illustrated from the Philippines have this angle, but several illustrated from Central Philippines (Solheim, n.d.: pl. 12*e* and 47*t–v*) are of this general type.

Malleret features only two other iron fragments from the Mekong delta. One is a portion of a long tang or stem while the other is a gouge or chisel with a pointed butt (1960: pl. XVIII top right). A type of tool like this was recovered from the surface of a cave site in Batungan Mountain, Masbate, Philippines (Solheim 1953: 59), and several were recovered from other sites in Central Philippines (Solheim, n.d.: pl. 48*b–d*).

The iron artifacts so far recovered in the Philippines show no relationship to the common type of iron tool from Malaya, excepting the tools from one site. The iron blades from Batu Kurau in Perak are similar to tools found in Central Philippines and the Mekong delta. The other type of iron tool recovered from the Mekong delta is also found in the Central Philippines. These specific iron tools from these three areas are related, but it is too early to tell how.

Two bronze artifacts from Cebu, Philippines

Two bronze artifacts, now in the Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan, were recovered by Guthe from a cave in Cebu, high up in the face of a cliff

near Camp 8 on the Cebu-Toledo Road. Associated with the two artifacts was fragmentary human skeletal material including skull, lower jaw and leg bone.

The first tool is a simple celt (C8–2; Pl. I*b* and fig. 1) with the socket somewhat rectangular in cross section. A pair of parallel lines in low relief is noticeable on one

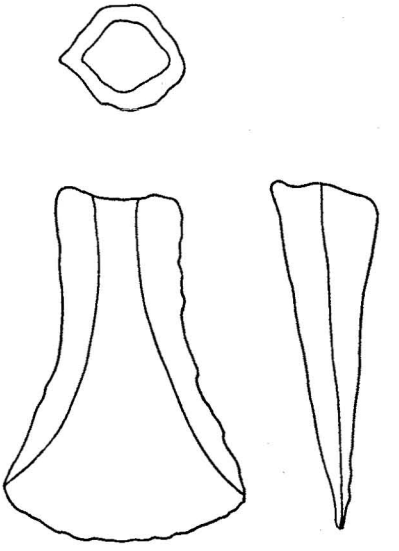

FIG. 1. Plan and cross sections of celt C8–2 from Cebu (½ size; C8 is the Guthe field-catalogue number).

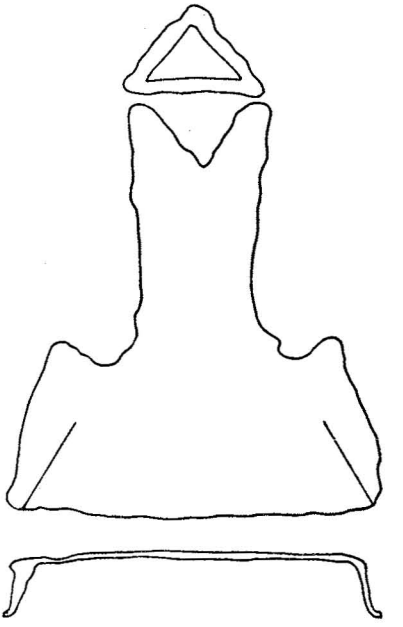

FIG. 2. Plan and cross sections of artifact C8–3 from Cebu (½ size).

face. Spectrographic analysis was made of the two tools but the film for this tool was not clear and the specimen was not rerun.

The second tool which is more complicated might be a spade (C8-3; Pl. II and fig. 2). The socket is triangular in cross section and there are raised wings at either side of the blade with distinct angles between the surface of the blade and the wings. From spectrographic analysis this tool contained major percentages of copper and tin, small amounts of calcium, silicon, and titanium, and traces of aluminium, silver, iron, manganese, and lead. There is a decoration in low relief running along two sides of the triangular socket and curving out on to the back portion of the blade (Pl. II*a* and fig. 3).

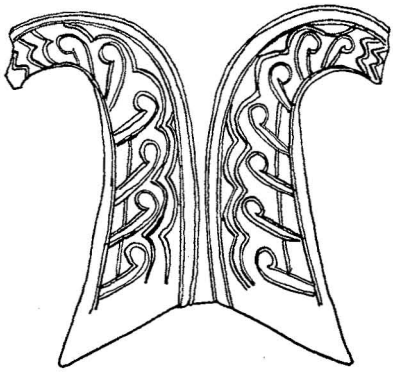

FIG. 3. Sketch of low relief design on artifact C8–3, made by Miss Evelyne H. Lawrence of the University of Michigan.

The design on this artifact is similar to designs found on Dongson bronze drums. However, the presence of only a trace of lead in the metal would tend to dissociate it from the Dongson bronzes. I have seen no other artifact at all similar to this one, so if any reader knows of anything like it, I should greatly appreciate hearing from him.

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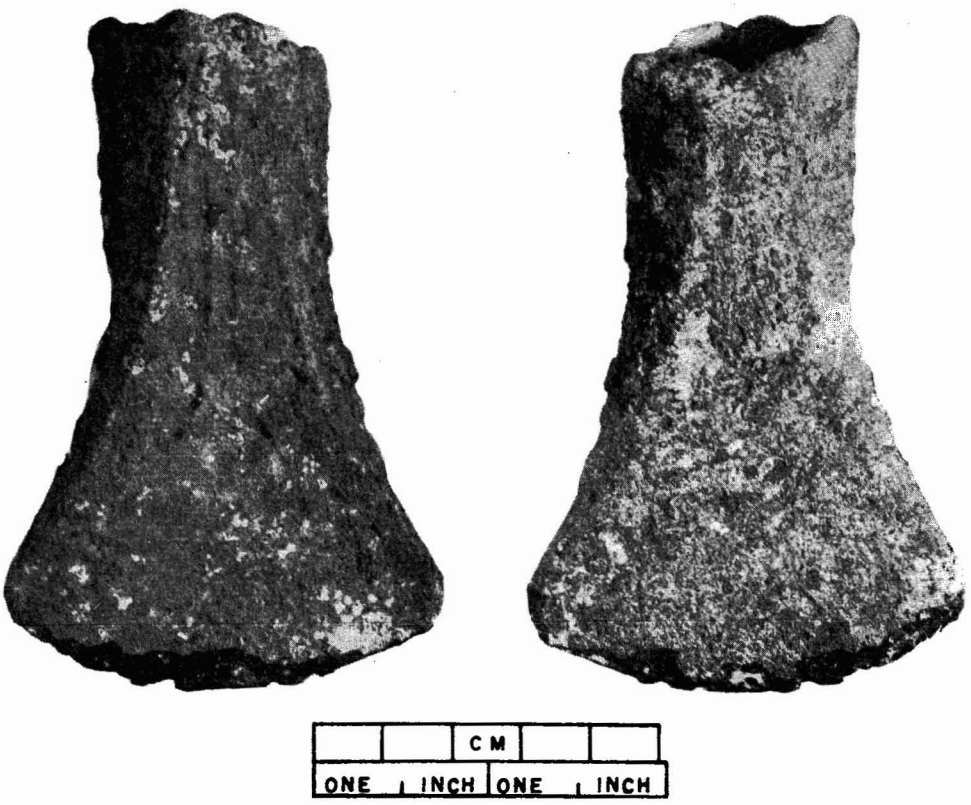
a. Carved sacred wooden box from Mountain Province, Philippines.



b. Bronze celt from Cebu.

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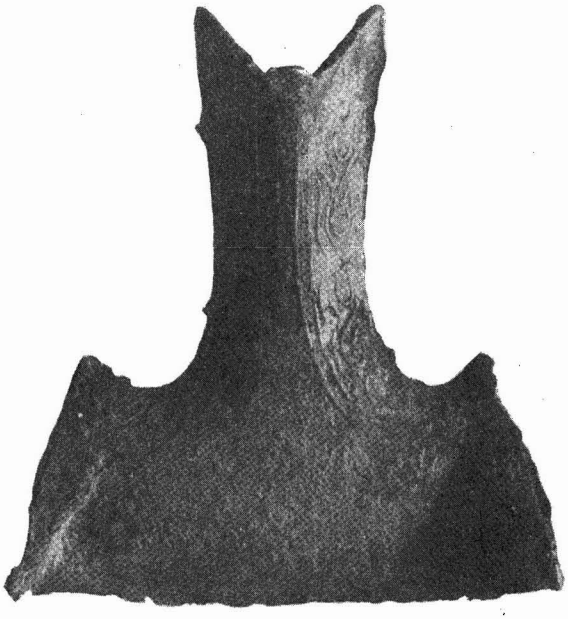
a



b

Cast bronze artifact from Cebu.

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